A

# SERMON

Preached *Feb.* 19. 1692.

Upon the

# FUNERAL

Of that late Excelllent Servant of Our LORD JESUS,

# Mr. Richard Fincher,

Who Finiſhed his Courſe,
*Feb.* 10. 1692.

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By *SAMUEL SLATER*, M. A.
Miniſter of the Goſpel.

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*LONDON*,

Printed by *J. Aſtwood* for *John Lawrence* at the *Angel* in the *Poultrey*. 1693.

# To that Flock of CHRIST, of which Holy Mr. *FINCHER* was the Faithful Paſtor.

DEAR FRIENDS,

GOD having made a ſore Breach upon you by taking home his Servant to himſelf, you made it your joint Requeſt that I would Preach to you upon that ſad and ſolemn Occaſion. The entire Love between him and me, together with the Kindneſs I have for you, forbad my Denial. I did the thing, through Divine Aſſiſtance: You then came upon me for the Publiſhing of what had been delivered, and therein prevailed too. Here it is, the Lord accompany this Sermon with a Bleſſing, that it may be profitable to you all, and many more. Having given you ſo much Counſel already, I ſhall deſire your following it, and will here add no more, but begg for you the Divine Conduct, Grace and Influence.

And you, MADAM, whoſe Conjugal Relation to this Worthy Perſon hath been diſſolved; I have rejoiced to ſee patiently bearing it, as one Taught of God; and Oh that you may have fuller refreſhings flowing into you from the Fountain of all good, now that pleaſant ſtream is cut off. And though your Communion here was but ſhort, may you have in Heaven an Eternal Communion with one another, and both with God. You

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*all I commend to him and the Word of his Grace, which is able to build you up, and give you an Inheritance among them that are ſanctified. In ſhort, be you all upright with God, ſtudy Godlineſs in its Power, live the Truths you Hear and Profeſs, adorn the Goſpel by an Exemplary Converſation, do not divide, but walk in Peace and Love; though the Shepherd be ſmitten, let not the Sheep ſcatter, but the Lord give you another after his own Heart. I am*

Yours in our Dear Lord Jeſus,

From my Study,
*March* 10. 169$\frac{2}{3}$.

*Samuel Slater.*

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*Lately Printed for* John Lawrence *at the* Angel *in the* Poultrey.

MR. *Slater*'s Thankſgiving-Sermon, *Octob.* the 27*th.* 1692. *Quarto.*

Mr. *Slater*'s Sermon at the Funeral of that Faithful Servant of Chriſt, Mr. *John Reynolds*, Miniſter of the Goſpel; who Dyed *December* 25. 1692. *Quarto.*

The true Intereſt of a Nation, or the Duty of Magiſtrates, Miniſters and People, in an Aſſize-Sermon at *Bucks*, *July* 5. 1692. By *John Howard*, M. A. Rector of *Marſton-Truſſel.* Quarto.

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PSAL.

# PSAL. CXIX. 75.

*I know, O Lord, that thy Judgments are right, and that thou in faithfulneſs haſt afflicted me.*

WHether we reckon this Pſalm to *David, the ſweet Singer of Iſrael,* or to ſome other holy Man of God as the *Penman* thereof; it is paſt all queſtion that the *Divine Spirit* was the Inditer of it, and we have reaſon to judge it worthy of ſo great an Author, becauſe full of moſt rich and excellent matter. You may obſerve in it the Deſcription of a godly man, whoſe Picture is curiouſly drawn, and to the Life, in his *Graces,* and holy *duties,* and ſore *afflictions,* and manifold *Experiences,* and ſweet Conſolations. But paſſing by the Conſideration of the whole, I ſhall confine my Diſcourſe, and for the preſent engage your Meditations to theſe words which I have been directed to, as a Subject very proper upon this ſad and ſolemn Occaſion. In which we plainly ſee the Friendly happy agreement between a moſt wiſe and holy God, and an humbled afflicted Saint, under and about thoſe dark Providences and ſmarting Diſpenſations, which are ordered out unto him; when there is not only a Rod but a Scorpion in the hand of the former, and multiplyed yea deep wounds on the back of the latter. The holy *Prophet* doth here ſpeak as a man lying under the Judgments of God, and exerciſed with Afflictions, a Child dear to his Father, and over him, yet under his frown; but in this very caſe far from quarrelling the Rod, and contending with his Father about it, he humbly ſubmits, and ſweetly quiets himſelf, freely making this ingenuous and thankful Acknowledgment: *I know O Lord, that thy Judgments are right, and that thou in Faithfulneſs haſt afflicted me.* The terms in the Text are ſo obvious and very eaſie, not needing that much time ſhould be ſpent in their Explica-

tion. Therefore all that I ſhall ſay to that purpoſe, will be no more than this.

The word *Judgment* is variouſly uſed in the ſacred Scripture, and particularly in this Pſalm; frequently we are to underſtand by it the *Law* of God, his Statutes and Commandements; theſe are *the Judgments of his mouth*, which in and *concerning all things are right*, there is nothing perverſe in them, but *as Silver tried in a Furnace of Earth ſeven times*, free from all droſs. *Rom.* 7. 12. *The Law is holy, and the Commandment holy, juſt and good.* Now if any Perſon be inclined thus to underſtand the word in this place, he ſhall have my leave ſo to do, I will not contend with him about it. Yet in my apprehenſion, it ſeems much more ſuitable to the Mind and Scope of the Prophet in this Place, to underſtand by *Judgments* thoſe *troubles and calamities* which the Lord is pleaſed to order out to the Children of Men, while they tabernacle in Fleſh, and are paſſing thorough this vale of tears. Thoſe *Providences* of God, which have an *angry aſpect* and frowning Countenance, whether they be *penal* and acts of revenge, and ſo inflicted upon wicked men his Enemies, or only *caſtigatory* and corrective, and ſo laid upon good Men and Women his Children, are Judgments. Thus 1 *Pet.* 4. 17. *The time is come that judgment muſt begin at the Houſe of God; and if it firſt begin at us, what ſhall be the end of them that obey not the Goſpel of God?* If there be ſuch ſufferings for Gods *Subjects and Favourites*, how will he handle *Rebels?* So again obſerve that place in the 1 *Corinth.* 11. 32. *If we would judge our ſelves, we ſhould not be judged; but when we are judged, we are chaſtened of the Lord, that we ſhould not be condemned with the World.* And ſuch Diſpenſations may very fitly be called Judgments on a twofold Account.

*Firſt*, Becauſe they are *rectoral* and *judicial* acts, they are acts of Government, put forth by God as holding the Reins in his hand, as *ſitting in the Throne judging right* and rendering unto men according to their Works. Even when they are ordered out to the Saints themſelves, not only for probation, or the Exerciſe of their Graces, but likewiſe for their ſins; there is not only a deſign of Love in the Bowels of them, and merciſull Purpoſes carrying on, but there are Characters

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and Marks of displeasure ingraven upon them; for though *God* is so gracious that he will not cast off his Children for sin, yet he is so holy that he will not bear with sin in his Children, but they shall feel he is offended; if they transgress, they shall suffer; if they will break the Hedge, some of the Thorns shall stick in their sides, *Psal.* 89. 30, &c. *If his Children forsake my Law, and walk not in my judgments: if they break my Statutes, and keep not my Commandments, then will I visit their transgressions with the Rod, and their Iniquity with Stripes.* This he threatned, notwithstanding he promiseth in the very next words, that *his loving kindness he will not utterly take from him, nor suffer his faithfulness to fail: He will not break his Covenant, nor alter the thing that is gone out of his lips.*

*Secondly, They may well be called Judgments, upon the Account of Gods ordering them out in infinite Wisdom.* In wrath he remembers Mercy, and doth all as becomes him to do it. He knowes what is best to be done, and how much his Children bear, and what the Providence will issue in, and how the Physick will work. *Isa.* 30. 18. *The Lord is a God of Judgment, blessed are all they that wait for him.* His Judgments are with judgment: This good man readily subscribed to it; *O Lord, thy judgments are right*, such as they should be, there is not any such thing in them that can be mended, and therefore nothing that should be quarrel'd.

And he doth not stop here, though it is good for one in trouble to come to this, but he goeth on, *thou in faithfulness hast afflicted me:* These Dispensations do speak thee both *a righteous Judge*, and a *cordial Friend*; in what thou hast done, thou hast been true to thy gracious Word, and to my chief Interest; though Flesh grumbles, and saith there is *severity* in this stroke, yet my Faith speaks better of my God, and tells me there is *his Love* in it. He hath done nothing but *what he might do to me*, and what He hath done *doth really make for me.* Though my Spirit be not right, nor my Duties right, nor my Carriage right, yet his Judgements are right.

And He doth not speak this at random, as one that had a mind to be talking, though it be he did not know what; nor doth he speak it with any hesitancy or misgiving of Mind left

it ſhould afterward be found otherwiſe, but with the greateſt aſſurance, confidence and alacrity imaginable, that he might work a belief in others who ſhould hear of it. I know, ſaith he, I know very well what I ſay: I know the thoughts that I have of my God and his dealings with me, they are not vain and miſtaken thoughts, but highly rational and well grounded: But you may ask, How did he come to know this? I anſwer, two wayes.

Firſt, *By the Word of Truth*: Which ſpeaks plainly, *Deut. 32. He is the rock, his work is perfect, for all his waves are judgment, a God of truth, and without iniquity, juſt and right is He.*

Secondly, *He knew it by other Saints Experiences and his own.* Both my Predeceſſors and my Contemporaries have been able to make an honourable Report of God, and ſo am I, *Pſal. 119. 67. Before I was afflicted I went aſtray, but now have I kept thy Word.* And again in the 71 Verſ. *It is good for me that I have been afflicted, that I may learn thy Statutes.* Theſe words do afford us ſeveral Truths worthy of our conſideration and repeated Thoughts. I will only name them.

Firſt, *Many of thoſe Afflictions which come upon the Saints, are the Judgments of God upon them.* I do not ſay *all* are ſo, but many. Probably the ſtroke of God upon you of this Congregation, is a Judgment. I do not take upon me poſitively to determin it, but it will be no prejudice to you to look upon it under that Notion, and carry accordingly, humbling your ſelves under the hand of God, and learning Righteouſneſs. Is there not a Cauſe? Find it out if you can, and beg that God would lead you into the knowledge of it, *Job 10. 2. I will ſay unto God, Do not condemn me, ſhew me wherefore thou contendeſt with me.*

Secondly, *The deareſt of Gods Saints are within the reach of his Judgments, and may be exerciſed by them.* As he will to their comfort glorioufly manifeſt *the love*, ſo when occaſion requires he will uſe the *Authority* of a Father. If his Children will be ſinfully deaf to *Doctrine*, he will open their Ears to *Diſcipline*, and *by* it. Thoſe that will not be pliant to the Word, ſhall feel the Rod. He hath ſuch a Love to them, and Care of them, that he will be ſure to *whip* them (though he doth not willingly) rather than *loſe* them.

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Thirdly, *The adminiſtrations of God to his People, in his judging and afflicting them, are ever managed with unſpotted Righteouſneſs and Faithfulneſs.* Reproach ſhall never cleave to his Majeſty. He will neither give his Glory to another, nor in the leaſt ſtain and blemiſh it himſelf. He can do nothing but what is right, and he will do nothing to his People but what is good. It is impoſſible for him to do any thing which ſhall violate the Law of Equity, and no leſs impoſſible is it for him to do any thing which is inconſiſtent with his own everlaſting Covenant, or their Intereſt and good.

Fourthly, *God doth and will ſatisfie his People about this:* They ſhall be able to ſay, I know it; they ſhall both ſee and feel it. Juſtice and Faithfulneſs ſhall be ſo plainly impreſs'd upon his Diſpenſations, and in ſuch legible Characters that they ſhall run and read them. In order hereunto God hath been pleaſed to do much in his Word, and he will do more by his holy and almighty Spirit, who dwelleth with them, and will be in them, and make all effectual upon them. But none of theſe things ſhall be the Subjects of the following Diſcourſe, any further than as they will fall in under the handling of that Doctrin which I intended for, and which with the Bleſſing of God will prove to your advantage, and that is this:

Doct. *Under the moſt afflictive Providences, the Children of God ought to preſs on to, and be expreſſive of a full ſatisfaction of Soul concerning the Righteouſneſs and Faithfulneſs of God in them.*

*We ought to be ſatisfied*, and have reaſon ſo to be, of that I ſhall ſpeak in the doctrinal part: *We ought to expreſs that ſatisfaction*, of this in the Application. The Text we have before us doth afford a very ſufficient and ſolid Foundation for us to build ſuch a Concluſion upon. We find this holy man had been met with by God in the way of his Judgments, and exerciſed with Afflictions, but we do alſo find that the Lord and his Servant were Friends notwithſtanding that, and perfectly agreed; this clearly appears by the honourable Teſtimony he gives concerning God, and his ſmart dealing with him.

him. He did not only put his mouth in the duſt, as one that had not a word to ſay againſt God, but he opened it with wiſdom, as one that had enough to ſay for God, and to his praiſe: *I know that thy judgments are right*; in the Original it is (as the Margin of our Bibles tells you) *Righteouſneſs*, Righteouſneſs it ſelf; they can be no more charged with being wrong or unjuſt, than *light* can with being *dark*, or *ſweetneſs* it ſelf with being *bitter*: And though thou haſt afflicted me, and doſt ſtill, I own it was and is in Faithfulneſs. So that here was no ſuch thing as a quarrel, no ſuch thing as an Objection, no finding of any fault, but juſtifying of God, and an humble acquieſcence in his Will and the Product thereof. Now here I would have this in the firſt place in a ſpecial manner taken notice of: That it is Gods Purpoſe and fixed Reſolution, that which his Heart is very much ſet upon, to have all things clear'd up and ſet to right between him and his People whom he dearly loves, and hath ſet apart for himſelf, and for an intimate and everlaſting communion with Him in the other and better World. It is his unalterable Will, that there ſhall be a mutual ſatisfaction; He will have a full ſatisfaction concerning them, and they again ſhall have a full ſatisfaction concerning him.

Firſt, *God will have a full ſatisfaction concerning his People.* I ſay, God is immoveably reſolved upon that, He will have ſatisfaction: But, alas! a poor Soul will ſay, I cannot give it him. *Job* 9. 2, 3. *How ſhould man be juſt with God, if he ſhould contend with him? he cannot anſwer him one of a thouſand.* Not *one mercy of a thouſand*, they have been ſo ill improved, not *one ſin of a thouſand*, they are ſo foul, hainous and crying. But be not diſcouraged at that, for ſince the Beſt of men are not able to make ſatisfaction, He himſelf hath been graciouſly pleaſed to make Proviſion, and to find out a way for the doing of it, and hath to that end and purpoſe *laid help upon one that is mighty*, that ſo his *righteous and holy Law* may not quarrel, but be anſwered in all its demands; and that *none of his glorious Attributes* may have cauſe to complain, but whatever Objections may be raiſed and brought in againſt them upon account of the Corruption

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and viriousneſs of their Natures, or the ſinfulneſs and Irregularities of their Hearts and Carriages, may receive a full anſwer, and ſo all Obſtructions and rubs which lay in the way of their Happineſs may be removed. And ſo he hath found a full, and will take an eternal ſatisfaction in that which his only begotten and moſt dearly beloved Son, and our moſt gracious and bleſſed Redeemer the *Lord Jeſus Chriſt*, did freely undertake, and fully perform in a way of active and paſſive Obedience; from that Sacrifice of himſelf which our High-Prieſt did once for all offer up, God hath ſmelt a ſweet ſavour of reſt, ſo that in Him he is now and for ever well-pleaſed with them. He can now cloſe with them, and with delight embrace them with his Arms, and lay them in the Boſom of his Love. Mark the Language of his Grace, which is poured out of his Lips, and how ſweetly he calls to them: *Iſa.* 1. 18. *Come now and let us reaſon together, ſaith the Lord, though your ſins be as Scarlet, they ſhall be as white as Snow, though they be red like Crimſon, they ſhall be as Wooll.* And now the *Devil* is caſt down, who is the great Accuſer of the Brethren, that would make it his buſineſs to accuſe them day and night before God in his Temple, God will not give an Ear to him. He had as good ſit ſtill, only his Hatred and Malice againſt you is ſo great that he cannot. Well, Chriſtians, look to it that you do not liſten to Satans Temptations, and you may be ſure, your Father will not liſten to his Accuſations. He is ſatisfied concerning you by his Son, and in him you are accepted. You are not ſatisfied with your ſelves, not with the Frame of your Hearts, but would have them more ſpiritual, holy and heavenly; nor with your Duties, but would have them more according to Goſpel rule: You would ſerve God better, and be more with him, yet in, thorough and by the Lord Jeſus Chriſt, God is ſatisfied concerning you, and with you, ſo that he reckons you his Jewels, his Portion and Inheritance; and in this you have reaſon to rejoyce: And then further

Secondly, *It is the Will of God concerning his People, that they ſhould likewiſe have a full ſatisfaction concerning him, and all his Diſpenſations, as they have had:* Pſal. 22. 2, 3. *O my*

*God*

*God, I cry in the Day-time and thou heareſt not, and in the Night-ſeaſon, and am not ſilent, but thou art holy, O thou that inhabiteſt the Praiſes of Iſrael:* And ſo *Aſaph* acknowledged in the *77th. Pſalm, That God's way was in the Sanctuary,* a moſt holy way, though at that time it was a myſterious and abſtruſe way: *His way was in the ſea, and his path in the great waters, and his footſteps were not known:* And God takes this well at their Hands, he hath his Book of Remembrance for ſuch, *Malachy* 3. 16. and it is that he doth expect from all his People, and will bring them to.

*That he expects it from them,* is clear from his expoſtulating with them, as in *Ezek.* 18. 25. *Hear, O Houſe of Iſrael, is not my way equal? are not your ways unequal?* and ſo in *Iſa.* 40. 27, 28. *Why ſayeſt thou, O Jacob, and ſpeakeſt, O Iſrael? my way is hid from the Lord, and my judgment paſſed over from my God: Haſt thou not known, haſt thou not heard, that the everlaſting God, the Lord, the Creator of the ends of the Earth, fainteth not, neither is weary, there is no ſearching of his underſtanding:* And thus he dealt with the tachy Prophet *Jonah,* who was ſo much off the Hooks upon *the ſparing of Nineveh,* and the Withering of the Gourd, in the ſhadow whereof he had ſo exceedingly rejoiced; the Lord was pleaſed to ſpeak to him more than once, *Jonah* 4. 4. *Doſt thou well to be angry?* And again, *Ver.* 9. *Doſt thou well to be angry for the Gourd?* Have I been ſo merciful to *Nineveh,* and to thy ſelf too, *Jonah,* and wilt thou be froward with me? Doſt thou well to be Angry? Have I done amiſs? Have I given thee any Cauſe? God would have all his People *pleas'd* with what he doth, and in Order to that, *ſatisfied*; and they have reaſon to be ſo, becauſe it is he that doth it: Were there no more, that ſhould in our Eſteem be enough alone. *David* counted it ſo in *Pſal.* 39. 9, 10. though he *was almoſt conſumed with the blow of God's Hand, yet he was dumb and opened not his mouth, becauſe He did it.*

And as God would have this in his People, and doth expect it from them, *ſo he is able to effect it and bring it to paſs:* He that hath found out a way to ſatisfie himſelf concerning his Peoples bad Actions, ſo that there ſhall be no

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abiding breach between him and them upon that ſcore, what is it that he cannot doe? He that hath done that in which lay the greateſt difficulty, cannot be poſed and non-plus'd by the leſs, *viz.* the ſatisfying of his People concerning his Diſpenſations of Providence and carriages towards them; as *in blaſting their Eſtates*, and making them melt as ſnow before the Sun; in *breaking to pieces their Relations*, and making them to ſit ſolitary and alone; in *taking away their Comforts*, and rendering their Lives bitter, and a burden to them; in *putting out that Light* in which they had rejoyced for a ſeaſon, *ſmiting their faithful Shepherd* who had fed them with ſound Knowledge and Underſtanding. Theſe things and all others, God hath made Proviſion for, and will ſatisfie his People about; though he condeſcends therein to them, not being reſponſible to his Creatures, *Dan.* 4. 35. *He doth according to his Will, both in the Army of Heaven, and among the Inhabitants of the Earth, and none can ſtay his hand, or ſay unto him, What doſt thou?* Yet thus he lays by Majeſty (as it were) and ſtoops to duſt and aſhes: thus he will deal with them, after he hath dipt his Pen in Gall, and written bitter things againſt them, at which they are troubled, yea ſtartled.

The next thing I ſhall do, is to ſhew you, how neceſſary this is for us, though it be altogether Mercy, Grace throughout in God: For there are apt to be in good men under dark and afflictive diſpenſations very undue and unbecoming Thoughts and Motions, a filthy ſcum ariſing. Poſſibly you have found in your ſelves ſomething of that nature under the late Providence, which at preſent you may think proper and right, what you are very well able to juſtifie; juſt as it was with *Jonah* in his extravagant Heat, his Paſſion had ſo blinded his Eyes, and conquer'd his Reaſon, that he told God to his Face, (*Jonah* 4. 9.) *I do well to be angry, even unto death:* But when theſe very Perſons are returned to themſelves, their furious heat is abated, and they afterward become more compoſed and ſedate, and enjoy a due calmneſs of ſpirit, and thereupon come to reflect on themſelves, they will ſee cauſe to bluſh before God, to condemn themſelves, and to be aſhamed of their words and actions. I will give you an Inſtance or two.

First, *In ſuch Caſes they are very forward to enter the Liſts, and Diſpute with God:* When his ways are out of their ſight, his Providences ſo many Riddles and Myſteries that they cannot Interpret; when the Hand of God comes near to a Man, and toucheth him to the quick, bleeding him in a Maſter-Vein, and taking away from him that which was the deſire of his Soul, and the Delight of his Eyes. There are irregular and unchild-like Workings in him, though at another time you would not have thought there had been any ſuch thing in the Man, but let God have us'd him at his Pleaſure, let God have tumbled and toſſed him up and down as he would, he would ſtill have fallen upon a ſquare, and when this and that and the other was gone, he would have poſſeſſed his Soul in Patience; but alas we find it with him as with Water that hath for ſome time been in a Glaſs, while it ſtands ſtill it looks pure and clear, but if one ſtir and ſhake it, then that filth riſeth which lay before at the bottom undiſcern'd, and now 'tis all over diſturb'd and roil'd: So here, the Chriſtian hath had ſome Diſappointment or Loſs, ſomething or other by which his Spirit is wounded, and that puts him quite out of Humour, and now he thinks himſelf able to deal with God, and, as I ſaid, would argue the Caſe with him. Thus it was with the Weeping Prophet, *Jerem.* 13. 10. Indeed he laid down this as an Eternal Truth, that would not admit of any queſtion; *Righteous art thou, O Lord:* Yet he thought there were ſome things that he might Animadvert upon, and be bold to diſcourſe with God about: *Let me talk with thee of thy Judgments*; Yes, do ſo, *Jeremy*, but when thou doſt, ſet a Watch before the door of thy Lips, and have a Care thou doſt not tranſgreſs. Well, he turns Queſtioniſt; *Wherefore doth the way of the wicked proſper? Wherefore are all they happy that deal very treacherouſly?* And Afflicted *Job* went beyond him, and roſe too high, *Job* 23. 3, 4, 5. *O that I knew where I might find him, that I might come even to his ſeat; I would order my Cauſe before him, and fill my Mouth with Arguments: I would know the Words which he would anſwer me, and underſtand what he would ſay unto me*: But know it is far more becoming of Man, and profitable for him, to deal with God in

a way of humble Submiſſion and fervent Supplication than in a way of Diſpute, for in this way God will certainly be too hard for Man, and teach him better Manners, as he did *Job*, whom he brought upon his Knees, and made throw down his Weapons, and cry *Peccavi*, *Job.* 40. 4. *Behold I am Vile*; both really ſo, and in mine own Eyes, *What ſhall I anſwer thee? I will lay my hand upon my mouth*, and ſo for the future Seal up my Lips, as one that do not know what to ſay, and have already offended in ſaying I did not know what. Let all the Earth keep ſilence before him, but vain Man would be Wiſe. And ſo

Secondly, *There is apt to be even in good Men themſelves ſomething of a Tumultuous and Diſcontented Spirit, riſing up againſt God becauſe of his Providences, forming in their Minds very unworthy and unbeſeeming Thoughts of him:* Exceeding diſhonourable Thoughts, which do wretchedly reflect upon God and Religion; this we ſee too too plainly in Holy *Aſaph*, Pſal. 73. He firſt looked abroad round about him, and there ſaw the Ungodly of the World free from thoſe Troubles with which many better than themſelves were exerciſed, and filled with all manner of Delights, Proſpering and Flouriſhing, increaſed in Riches, and having more than Heart could Wiſh; then he turn'd home, and conſider'd how Matters ſtood there, and he found himſelf roughly handled, *Being plagued all the day long, and chaſtened every morning*; and upon this he was almoſt ready to run with the Herd, to throw up all, and caſt Dirt in the Face of Godlineſs, by laying down this Vile Aſſertion, *Ver.* 13. *Verily I have cleanſed my heart in vain, and waſhed my hands in innocency:* Only God was graciouſly pleaſed ſeaſonably to ſtep in with his preventing Kindneſs, and to Recover him again, and bring him to his right Mind, by making him to ſee and conſider the tendency of ſuch a ſpeech, Ver. 15. *If I ſay I will ſpeak thus, behold I ſhould offend againſt the generation of thy Children.* By this you ſee what need good Men have of a Corrector.

Now in the next place my Buſineſs will be to ſhew, That before God hath done with his People, He will ſo Anſwer all their Objections, ſo clear up Matters to them, ſo open and

explain the abſtruſe Riddles of his Providence, that they ſhall be well ſettled in their Minds, and both able and ready to profeſs themſelves very well ſatisfied about that which God hath done; for the Proof whereof there is no need of carrying you any further than the Text, where the Pſalmiſt doth with all his Heart juſtifie God; *I know O Lord that thy Judgments are right, and that thou in faithfulneſs haſt afflicted me:* And when theſe two things are once ſet before the Chriſtian in a juſt light, namely the Juſtice or Righteouſneſs of the Diſpenſation, and the Faithfulneſs of God in it, the ſweet Satisfaction of his Soul muſt neceſſarily reſult from it: And there is enough plainly laid down in the Sacred Scripture to ſatisfie as to both theſe, any one that is acquainted with it, and would be ſatisfied, and hath not a mind to quarrel: As I ſhall, through the Divine Aſſiſtance and Bleſſing make to appear, beginning firſt with the Righteouſneſs of God's Judgments, or ſmarting Diſpenſations, which, if I be not greatly miſtaken, will be evident to him that will give himſelf time and leave to Conſider theſe few things.

Firſt, *The Abſolute Sovereignty and Power of God:* This doth carry a great deal of Strength along with it, and is alone ſufficient to ſilence Diſputes, and to make a Man put his Mouth in the Duſt, let the thing which God hath done be what it will. It muſt be granted that all Men are accountable, both thoſe that are under the Law, and thoſe that made it. The Actions of Men are to be weighed in a juſt Ballance, and judged of by Reaſon and according to Law: To affirm any Man to be altogether above a Law, is to make him more than a Man: But who ſhall ſay, *What doſt thou,* to him who hath unqueſtionable right to do whatſoever he pleaſeth both in Heaven and in Earth? All Perſons and Things are in his Hand, and as much at his diſpoſe as Clay is in the Hand of a Potter, of which he can make a Veſſel of Honour or of Diſhonour. As God at his own time called the World out of Nothing, and eſtabliſhed the Earth upon the Floods, ſo He can at his own time (as He hath of late up and down) cauſe tremendous and depopulating Earthquakes, and at laſt burn it up and all the Works therein. As when He pleaſed He

did

did raiſe Man out of Duſt, ſo when He pleaſeth He can ſay *Unto Duſt thou ſhalt return.* At his own Pleaſure he ſends Labourers to work in the Vineyard, ſome at the ſixth Hour of the Day, ſome at the ninth, and ſome at the eleventh: So, at his own Pleaſure he ſaith to this Man, and to that, and to the other, *I have no more Work for you to do:* When He ſees good, He Calls ſuch an one to his Service, he hath a Job for him, and when he ſees fit, he ſaith, Now you ſhall take your reſt, *thou haſt been faithful in thy little, now enter into the joy of thy Lord:* All things are and ſhall be as God will have them; and *Rom.* 9. 20. *Who art thou, O Man, that repliеſt againſt God?* or Anſwereſt again, and Diſputeſt with him? It was in this that the ſtrength of that Argument lay, which *Elihu* brought for the quieting of *Job*'s diſturbed Spirit, and the putting a deſirable end to that over-hot Controverſie which had been between him and his three Friends, when he Interpoſed, endeavouring to bring things to a good and amicable Iſſue, he laid all the weight upon this bottom. *Job* was at a perfect loſs, his Heart did not reproach him, but all along he had the Teſtimony of his Conſcience that *He was not wicked*, but had ſincerely and induſtriouſly endeavoured to walk in his Integrity, and thereupon he wondered that ſuch ſevere Strokes ſhould be Orde'rd out to him: On the other ſide his three Friends were Nonplus'd too, and could not tell how to look upon *Job* as a godly Man, but an Hypocrite, Unmask'd ſince he was ſo exerciſed, humbled and emptied; *Elihu* then comes to untie the Knot which had been too hard for them, and reſolved all into the Sovereignty of *God*, Job 33. 12, 13. *I will anſwer thee, that God is greater than Man, why doſt thou ſtrive againſt him? for he giveth no account of any of his Matters:* He is too great for that, infinitely too high to be brought to the Creatures Barr: And when *Elihu* had proſecuted the Argument, and with much holy Wiſdom managed the part of a Moderator, God himſelf ſeconded him, and went on after the ſame manner that his Servant had done, inſtructed by his Spirit, *Job* 40. 2. *Shall he that contendeth with the Almighty inſtruct him? he that reproved God, let him anſwer it:* And *Ver.* 8, 9. *Wilt thou diſannull my Judgment? wilt thou condemn*

*condemn me that thou mayeſt be righteous? haſt thou an Arm like God? or canſt thou thunder with a Voice like him?* and you may ſee that when this Holy Man *Job* had heard and been better informed than before concerning this great Truth, he made haſte and delayed not to reſolve upon an humble ſilence: *I have heard of thee by the hearing of the Ear*; i. e. I have formerly had ſome Notices given me of God, I have had Teachings from my Parents and Inſtructors, *but now mine Eyes have ſeen thee*; I have had from thee farther and much clearer Diſcoveries of thy Self, and Power and Glory, than ever I had from Man, and now inſtead of Contending with thee, *I abhor my ſelf, and repent in duſt and aſhes*, Job 42. 5, 6. and before that in the 40 *Chap.* 4, 5. *Ver. Behold I am vile, what ſhall I anſwer thee*; *I will lay my hand upon my mouth: Once have I ſpoken, but I will not anſwer*; *yea twice, but I will proceed no further*; Or, as it is in the Original, *I will not add*, not a Word more, not a Syllable more: There hath been too much already abſurdly ſpoken by me againſt thy Wiſe and Holy Providences, who haſt ſuch a Sovereign Authority, and unlimited univerſal Right to do whatſoever thou wilt, for that the good Man did acknowledge and ſubſcribe to, *Job* 42. 2. *I know that thou canſt do every thing*; nothing that is evil, every thing that is good; every thing that is not a contradiction in it ſelf nor to him, nothing that is unworthy of him; every thing that doth become him: He can do every thing *for us*, and every thing *with us* that he pleaſeth. God will not do all that he can, but He can do all that he will: He hath Power to do it, yea and he hath Authority too, and therefore every thing that he doth muſt needs be right, becauſe he hath a right to do what he pleaſeth. There is none that can give Law to God, only He is a Law to himſelf.

Secondly, *Conſider God in all thoſe lighter or heavier Afflictions, with which he doth exerciſe the Children of Men, yea his own Children*; *he muſt of neceſſity be juſtified and acknowledged right, becauſe he doth not in any of them exceed the demerit of their ſins*: He cannot but do right in all things, that doth wrong in nothing. We do indeed meet with this Pathetical Expreſſion in *Job* 23. 2. *Even to day is my Complaint bitter*; It is bitter

ter *to me*; for thô it gives me Eaſe, yet it is not what I like; I do not love to be always Complaining, and I find it is bitter *to you*, you do not reliſh it, you do not love to have your delicate tender Ears thus grated, yet, ſaith he, *My ſtroke is heavier than my groaning*: If theſe Groans pierce your Ears, there are Sorrows that wound my Heart; if my Groans be great, my Burden is much greater; if my Complaint be very bitter, I am ſure the blow which God hath given me is very ſmart: You think my Patience is very ſmall, but you are not ſenſible of my Pain, you do not feel that which I feel: But mark this, though *Job* did ſay, *his Stroke was greater than his Groans*, yet he doth not ſay that *it was greater than his Sins*; No, No, the Sins of an Hour deſerve all the Afflictions of a Life, and more too: There is more evil in the leaſt ſin than there is in the greateſt Affliction: There is good in Affliction, but none at all in Sin. See what *Zophar* ſaid to *Job*, Job 11. 6. *Know that God exacts of thee leſs than thy Iniquities deſerve*; God hath taken away thy Servants, and thy Cattle, and thy Children, and ſuffered Satan to ſmite thee with Boyls from the Crown of the Head to the Sole of the Foot, and hither thou art come from great Honour and Eſtate to a Dunghil, but as good a Man as thou art and thinkeſt thy ſelf to be, thine Iniquities deſerve worſe than all this. Iniquity for certain deſerves Affliction, but in this Life God never Orders out to any ſo many and ſo great Afflictions as their Iniquities do deſerve. The leaſt Mercy is more than all our Earnings amount to, and the greateſt Affliction leſs than our leaſt Sin deſerves. *David* complained in *Pſal.* 38. *That God's Arrows ſtuck faſt in him, and his Hand preſſed him ſore*: But his ſins made deeper Wounds in his Conſcience than thoſe Arrows did in his Fleſh, and accordingly he cryed out in the 4*th.* Verſe, *that his Iniquities were gone over his Head, and as an heavy burden they were too heavy for him*: The Hand of God did ſorely preſs him, but his Iniquities did preſs him a great deal worſe. The Condition into which ſinning and God provoking *Jeruſalem* had been brought, and in which it lay for the ſpace of ſeventy Years, was exceeding deplorable: You muſt needs account it ſo if you ever took Notice how it is ſet

out by the Prophet *Jeremiah* in his *Lamentations*: Yet Holy *Ezra* humbly and ingenuouſly acknowledged to the Glory of God, *Ezra* 9. 13. *That he had puniſhed them leſs than their Iniquities.* My Friends, it is a very proper Courſe for you, and for others under Affliction, firſt to take a ſerious View of your *Sins*, looking upon them through the Glaſs of *Chriſt's Blood*, for ſo you will ſee them to be *out of meaſure ſinful*, and after that turn your Eyes upon your *Afflictions*, and behold their Face in the Glaſs of your *ſins*, and then you will ſee them to be *very moderate*, and that the Divine Contendings with you are *in meaſure*. Whoſoever he be that doth really ſee into the Demerit of ſin, cannot but preſently diſcover much of the Mercy which is in the Affliction; and it muſt be granted that thoſe Afflictions can be no other than right which are Merciful Afflictions.

Thirdly, *Conſider God in his depriving his People of their Comforts, and taking away from them their pleaſant things*, and how grievous ſoever this Diſpenſation is to them, God cannot but therein be right, becauſe *He takes from them nothing but that which was his own. Job* was ſtript to his very Skin, and that too was not left whole; he then looked to what would be at laſt, that as he came Naked into the World, ſo he ſhould go Naked out, but ſtill he did not quarrel: How came that about? See *Job* 1. 21. *The Lord hath given, and the Lord hath taken, bleſſed be the Name of the Lord.* God hath taken away your Eſtates, how came you to have them? were they not of his beſtowing? Remember then the ſame Hand that hath now caſt you down, did before lift you up. God hath now Written you Childleſs, but conſider that he made you Parents; it was *His Woull and his Flax, his Gold and his Silver*, and your Children were more his than your own: God hath now taken away your Husband, and your Father, and your Paſtor, but He gave him firſt, and when He gave him you knew He did not give him to you for ever. You knew when you came together, and while you lived together, it would be only for a ſeaſon, and you muſt part again. When *God* gave him to you, it was with the Reſervation of his own Intereſt, which muſt always be kept entire.

entire. God did not part with, nor in the leaſt diminiſh his own Right when he put him into your Hands: He gave him to you, but it was for a time. The truth is he did only lend him to you, in his Pity and Love he ſent him to you, that he might be an Helper to your Faith and Joy, and promote your Progreſs in that way of Truth and Holineſs which leads to Heaven and Glory. You knew that it was God's Intention, his fixed and unalterable Reſolution to ſend for him home as ſoon as he had finiſhed that which was given him to do: And what Reaſon can be aſſigned why He or any other Faithful Miniſter or Godly Chriſtian ſhould ſtay here after his Work is done? It would be an irkſom and tedious thing for an holy Soul to live in the World and be Idle, to live and have nothing to do: *Shall I not do with my own as I pleaſe?* ſaid the Maſter to that Labourer who quarrell'd with him about his Pay: And may not the great God much more ſay ſo? What, ſhall I ask your leave? Is it fit that I ſhould adviſe with you what I ſhall do with, and how I ſhall diſpoſe of that which is mine own? Miniſters are Stars, with which I have beautified the Firmament of the Church, which is a lower Heaven; theſe I have made and appointed to give Light unto the World, and I will ſet them in what Orb I pleaſe, and when they have ſhined there, and ſcatter'd their benign Influences as long as I ſee good, I will place them in another; and when they have done all that which it is my Pleaſure ſhould be done by them, I will take them up to an higher Sphere, even that of Heaven, where they ſhall ſee my Face in Righteouſneſs, Contemplate my Glory, and be Satisfied with my Love and Likeneſs. But once more

Fourthly, *Let us View thoſe Judgments or Afflictions which God Orders out to his People in all the Circumſtances of them, and we ſhall find they are right throughout.* Here I might be very large, but will Contract.

His Judgments are right as to *the Principle from which God acts* in the Ordering them out, and as to the End at which he aims, and as to the Means of which he makes Uſe, and as to the Meaſure of their Sufferings, how much they ſhall bear, and as to the Time how long they ſhall continue. God is ſo exact in theſe and all other things that can poſſibly be named, that there is not the ſmalleſt Failure: That which they ſaid of our dear Lord Jeſus while he was here on Earth, we may moſt truly affirm of God, *He hath done all things well.* Were the World to begin again, all his Providences ſhould be as they have been, becauſe nothing in them can be mended. I will give ſome light touches and ſhort hints upon thoſe things which I have named, and ſo paſs on.

There are Judgments and dark Providences which God Orders out to Churches and particular Saints, but the *Principle from which in them God acts, is a Principle of Love*, and that is not only right but ſweet: He Loves them *while* he afflicts them, and he afflicts them *becauſe* he Loves

 them,

them, *Revel.* 3. 19. *As many as I love I rebuke and chaſten.* Poſſibly his Love is not plainly impreſs'd upon the Rod, ſo that thou canſt run and read it, at preſent it is conceal'd, but it will break out and ſhew it ſelf in due time. *Ephraim* was as a Bullock unaccuſtomed to the Yoke, *impatient and unruly*, and as ſuch he was Chaſtiſed, the Whip ſmarted, and the Goad pricked him, yet he was *God's dear Son and pleaſant Child*, and his Father reſolved to *have Mercy upon him.* God hath taken this and that from you, Moderate your Grief, for He *will not take his loving kindneſs* from you. The Rod may ſmart and put you to Pain, but it is the Hand of Divine Love which lays it on.

As God is *right* in the Principle from which he acts, ſo He is *in the End* at which he aims, for that is exceeding gracious, *Heb.* 12. 10. *He chaſtens us not for his own pleaſure but for our profit, that we may be partakers of his holineſs:* He aims not at the Weakening of our Bodies and Eſtates, but the Mending of our Souls; not that we might be made the poorer by it, but the better: And as this is his End, ſo it ſhall be attained, *Rom.* 8. 28. *We know that all things ſhall work together for good to them that love God:* They have done it hitherto, and ſo they ſhall for the future: It is clear from conſtant Experience: *We know it:* Good is in the Heart and Purpoſe of God, and all things ſhall be ſubſervient to it, all ſhall make their Contributions. This late Providence, the Death of your Worthy *Paſtor* was for good, for certain it was good for him; *to him to live was Chriſt, and therefore to him to dye muſt needs be gain,* unleſs *Paul* were miſtaken, *Philip.* 1. 21. That you will eaſily grant, *viz.* He is no loſer by leaving of the World, and of You, becauſe he is gone to Heaven, He is where He would be, where He knows more, and enjoys more, and is better than he could here, had he lived *Methuſelah*'s Age; and this ſhall work for good to you alſo: But you do not ſee how that ſhould be. It is very likely you are dim-ſighted, and ſee but a little way; and let this be enough for you, (as indeed it is at preſent) that though you do not ſee, God doth, who is Wiſer than you. And then

*God is right as to the Means which he uſeth:* Thoſe that he makes Choice of and employs, are the beſt that could be in the Caſe: Or, if they be not ſo in themſelves, he both can and will make them ſo; if they be too Weak, he will Impower them; and if they have no Virtue of their own, he will Infuſe ſome into them, as in the Sound of *Rams-Horns*, before which the Walls of *Jericho* fell; or if they be contrary, he will reconcile them. One would think *Clay* and *Spittle* are enough to put out ſeeing Eyes, but when he pleaſeth he can temper them into ſo Sovereign a Remedy as ſhall give Sight to one that was born Blind.

Further, *God is right as to the Degree and Height of the Suffering:* When angry

angry with his Children, He ſtirs not up all his Wrath; No, No, He Contends with them in meaſure: He never maketh too great a Rod, nor gives his Patient too large a Doſe, but weighs out every thing, ſo that there ſhall not be one Drop of Gall too much in the Cup: *He is faithful, who will not ſuffer you to be tempted above what you are able:* Full out as much, but no more. *If need be you are in heavineſs*, no more than need, no longer than need. And ſo

*God is right as to the Time*; when Trouble ſhall come, and when it ſhall go, when it ſhall begin, and when ceaſe. He doth every thing in Seaſon. In the Fulneſs of Time He ſent his Son into the World, and ſo He ſends Affliction. Death comes to reap his Corn when it is White to the Harveſt, and He puts every one of his Children to Bed at their Hour. When his Faithful Servants have Finiſhed their Work, then he takes them to their Reſt, and lays them at perfect Eaſe in the Boſom of *Abraham*, or rather his own. They ſhall not out-live it, nor ſhall they dye before it is done. I hope I have ſaid enough to ſatisfie you about the Perfect Righteouſneſs of God in his Judgments, and that may well ſilence you.

There is another thing in the Text which this Holy Man ſaith *He did know*, and that is, *the Faithfulneſs of God in afflicting him.* And if the other doth ſilence, this may well quiet and delight the Afflicted Saint: And truly we have all of us reaſon to be ſatisfied about this, that though God often is an Afflicting God, yet He always is a Faithful God, and it is in his Faithfulneſs that he doth Order out Afflictions to them. Now this will appear if you Conſider theſe two things, God is Faithful to his Covenant, and to his Peoples Intereſt.

*Firſt*, In afflictive Providences *God is Faithful to his own Covenant*: Inſtead of running Croſs to it, he acts in a Wiſe Purſuance of it. *He never runs Croſs to it*, for while the Saints are here, the Covenant doth not put any of them out of the reach of Afflictions, *Galat.* 4. 1. *The Heir as long as he is a Child differs nothing from a Servant, though he be Lord of all*; but may have as courſe Fare and as hard Uſage; ſo may one of thoſe that are Heirs of God and Glory. Indeed we are aſſured, *there is no Condemnation to them that are in Chriſt Jeſus*: And that Security is matter of great Joy; but tho' by laying hold upon Chriſt and the Covenant they are free from *Condemnation*, yet they may expect *Probations* whenſoever God pleaſe, and *Correction* when they deſerve and need it. As we before intimated, God hath reſerved unto himſelf a Liberty and Power of *Viſiting his Children's Iniquities with the Rod, and their Tranſgreſſions with Stripes.*

But *not running Croſs to the Covenant* is not all, it is too little, for in afflictive Providences upon good Men, *God acts in purſuance of his Covenant*, for by that he ſtands Obliged to be not only a *Sun* to them

for refreſhing, and a *Shield* for defence; not only *to give them Grace* in the way, *and Glory* in the Country, but alſo *to withhold no good thing from them that walk uprightly:* Now Reaſon and Experience tell us that *Phyſick is good*, wholſome and neceſſary, ſometimes as well as *Food*; and *Purges*, tho' ſtrong, and make Heart-ſick, are good as well as *Cordials*, and *bitter* things are good as well as *ſweet*, Pſal. 119. 71. *It is good for me that I have been afflicted:* Many an holy and gracious Perſon cannot ſay, It is good for me *that I am afflicted.* Poor Creature, his Spirit is ſo diſorder'd by the bitterneſs of the Affliction, that he cannot at preſent taſte the ſweetneſs of that good it doth him, but ſooner or later every ſuch an one ſhall ſay, *It is good for me that I have been afflicted.* While God is Plowing upon their Backs, and making long his Furrows, they conclude it is very *ſtrange Work*, but when they once come to reap the Harveſt, they ſhall moſt freely, and with thankfulneſs acknowledge to his Glory, that it was *very good Work.*

*Secondly*, In afflictive Providences *God is moſt true and faithful to his Peoples Intereſt:* Though they be and often are *Sufferers*, yet it is to be Charged upon themſelves, and not upon God, if they be *loſers:* It is his gracious Will that they ſhould not loſe but gain by their Sufferings, and that their Gains ſhould not only compenſate and equal their Loſſes, but likewiſe much exceed them: From the Thorns that prick and wound them, and let out ſome of their Blood, *they ſhall gather the peaceable Fruit of Righteouſneſs*, Heb. 12. 11. When the Lord leads his People into a Waſte and howling Wilderneſs, he makes for them a *right way*, though there was none before; poſſibly it is ſteep, ruggid and troubleſome, however it is right; and walking in it undefiled, they ſhall be brought to a pleaſant Place, a good Land, *a City of Habitations.* When God is ſtripping you of this and that, and the other Delight, He is thereby fitting you for a more Noble Enjoyment, a more Valuable Good, yea, for thoſe Bleſſings which run parallel with the Line of Eternity. *This is all the Fruit to take away your ſin*, and to prepare you for a more intimate Communion with him here, and a plenary endleſs Fruition of him in the other World, 1 *Cor.* 3. 22. *All things are yours, whether* Paul, *or* Apollos, *or* Cephas, *or the World, or Life, or Death, or things preſent, or things to come, all are yours:* O the Riches of a Believer! all his, Miniſters, Ordinances, Providences, thoſe that look pleaſantly upon you, and thoſe too that have a terrible Aſpect, all are yours, your Friends, your Servants, all imployed for the promoting of your Holineſs, and thereby your Happineſs; the good Man in the 73*d. Pſalm*, was *pained, grieved, and pricked in his reins*, but upon his going into the *Sanctuary*, and Conſulting with the *Divine Oracles*, his Pains abated and went off, ſo that He quickly found all well; 23, 24. *Nevertheleſs I am continually with thee*; and though evil be with me,

me, I will not fear it ſo long as I am with thee; *thou holdeſt me by my right hand*, whereby I am ſafe from ſinking into utter ruine; *thou ſhalt guide me with thy Counſel*, and ſo whatever I may loſe by the way, I ſhall not be quite loſt my ſelf; *and afterward receive me unto glory*, and if thou receive me, its no matter who rejects me, and however things go with me at the preſent, I am ſure they will be perfectly well at laſt; *For the ſufferings of this preſent life are not worthy to be compared with the glory which ſhall be revealed*, Rom. 8. 18. No, not to be mentioned the ſame day, becauſe theſe are but *light Afflictions*, and ſhort, *but for a moment*, and yet they work for real Saints *a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory*. Thus you have ſeen that all God's Judgments are right, wherefore he deſerves to be juſtified, and that he is Faithful in Afflicting his Children, therefore it becomes them to be ſatisfied: He will Correct them, that he may not Loſe them; He will Judge them, that he may not Condemn them with the World. We have finiſhed the Doctrinal part, and ſhall now proceed to the Uſe, which will be by way of Exhortation, dividing it ſelf into two Branches.

*USE.*

Exhortation firſt: *I do Counſel and beſeech you all to reſt ſatisfied with and ſubſcribe to the Righteouſneſs of God in his Judgments that are upon you, and his Faithfulneſs in thoſe Afflictions with which he hath been pleaſed to exerciſe you:* Let him be juſtified when he Chides and Frowns, let him be Clear'd when he Judgeth. Do this now with reference to that ſmarting Stroak which was lately given you, and proved the ſad Occaſion of the preſent Diſcourſe, and do the ſame too with reference to any other Rebuke and Blaſt of Providence which is upon you: And it is according to the Will of God and the Practice of his People, for you to make your ſatisfaction known. Let it appear, and that by ſuch things as theſe:

Firſt, *By Ceaſing and putting an end to all Diſputes:* Stop the Mouth of Contradiction, and let your Souls keep Silence unto God, let there be no riſing of Heart againſt God, no Objecting againſt any thing that He hath done, no finding of Fault. Know, O Man, who and whatſoever thou art, however diſtinguiſhed from thy Neighbours, and dignified above them, the great God is above thy Match, and by no means to be Contended with; *He gives no Account of his Matters*, and therefore not to be ſummoned to the Creatures-Bar: He himſelf is the Supream Judge, by whom all are to be Sentenced as to their Eternal State, and from whom there lieth no Appeal, and therefore be not you ſo bold as to ſit Judges upon him or any of his Providences. Remember *David*'s Carriage when almoſt Conſumed by the Blow of God's Hand, *Pſal.* 39. 9. *I was dumb, I opened not my mouth, becauſe thou didſt it.* And look upon the Man bearing the Yoke in his Youth, and Conſider how

he

he is described in the 3 *Lament.* 28, 29. *He sits alone and keeps silence, and puts his Mouth in the dust if so be there may be hope, and giveth his Cheek to him that smites him.* Certainly, *An humble Submission and patient Silence* do best become the greatest and most Holy Persons under the most severe Chastenings. Think with your selves what Colour of Reason you can possibly have for Objecting against that which is every way right. Why should you go about to find a Fault where there is none, especially when every one of you have above a thousand.

Secondly, *Quarrel your selves for former Quarrelings of God*, and unreasonable dislikes of his Dispensations; thus it was with Holy *Job*, tho' for a time *he would maintain his own ways before God*, and thought he had enough to say, *Job* 23. 3, 4. *O that I knew where I might find him, that I might come even to his Seat, I would order my Cause before him, and fill my Mouth with Arguments*; but he was of another mind when he was brought forth into a clearer light, then he took God's part against himself, and that in the same words which God had used with a very little Variation, *Job* 42. 3. *Who is he that hideth Counsel without Knowledge, therefore have I uttered that I understood not, things too wonderful for me, which I knew not*, which was an humble acknowledgment both of his *Ignorance*, and of his *Folly* in meddling with what was above him. The like we find in *Asaph*, he being in anguish of Spirit, burdened with a continued Series of Affliction, and heated with Temptations, *spake unadvisedly with his Lips*, he threw dirt in the Face of Religion and Godliness, by saying, *He had cleansed his Heart in vain, and washed his Hands in Innocency:* But when that Violent Paroxism was over, and being at leisure from his Passion, he came to make a due reflection upon what he had said, he fell upon himself with a just and holy Indignation, and of his own accord cryed out, *Psal.* 73. 22. *So foolish was I and ignorant, I was as a beast before thee:* He did not only *eat up his own words*, which he found exceeding bitter to him, but by *spitting in his own Face* he gave Glory to God.

Thirdly, *Submit and yield to God for the future*, and do it cheerfully, lye at his Foot, put your selves and your all into his Hand, and leave it to him to take his own way with you, and to use his own Method. Some of the *Jewish* Writers say that *David* did utter these Words in the Text, when he was forced to leave his Palace, and to flee before the Face of his unnatural and rebellious Son *Absalom*, in danger of losing both his Kingdom and Life. And if so, then being so sweetly and fully satisfied about the *Righteousness and Faithfulness of God* in his dealings with him, you may see how readily he resigns himself *to the disposal of God*, 2 Sam. 15. 25, 26. *The King said unto* Zadok, *carry back the Ark of God into the City, if I shall find Favour in the Eyes of the Lord, he will bring me again, and shew me both it and his habitation: But if he thus*

*thus ſay, I have no delight in thee; behold, here am I, let him do to me as ſeemeth good unto him.* If my God have no Pleaſure in me, I will take Pleaſure in nothing; if he will lay me aſide, I will be content; if he will cut me off, I will lay my Head upon the Block: God ſhall Order, and I will accept; His Will ſhall be the *Ruling Will*, and mine the *Complying Will.* Let him as he pleaſeth Carve out my Condition, and I will take it as it comes: If I muſt no longer wear a Crown, then I will take up a Croſs. And the Church was much in the ſame frame when fallen and ſitting in darkneſs, *Micah* 7. 9. *I will bear the Indignation of the Lord*, take all patiently, and accept the Puniſhment of mine Iniquity, for I have ſinned againſt him, therefore though the Rod ſmart I will Kiſs it.

Laſtly, *Be ſure to juſtifie God*; always give the Cauſe on his ſide, and ſpeak honourably of him and all that he doth. God is *always* juſt, and *in every thing*; juſt in his Acts of Mercy and richeſt Grace, *Rom.* 3. 26. *He is juſt when he is the juſtifier of him that believeth in Jeſus:* Juſt in all the Afflictions of this Life, and ſo he is in the Miſeries of the Damned in the next, *Rom.* 2. 5. *The very day of Wrath* (though dark and gloomy) will carry along with it ſufficient light to reveal and manifeſt *the righteous Judgment of God*; therefore in the forenamed inſtance of *Job* we obſerved that after *Elihu* had performed his part, and *God* had ſeconded him, that good Man ſubmitted, and ſpake God's own Language, thereby ſhewing his being Convinced that what he had ſaid before was according to the dictates of his own fooliſh and corrupt Heart, now he would ſpeak as God ſpeaks, whom he knew to be Wiſdom it ſelf, and Truth it ſelf, and Goodneſs it ſelf. It is not enough for us not to ſpeak againſt God, we muſt be ſpeaking for him, though he needs it not. None ſhall ever have Cauſe to repent of Commending God, becauſe we can never riſe too high in his Commendations, we can never ſpeak too much of him, nor too well. Our Tongues are never ſo much our Glory as when employed in ſhewing forth his Glory. He doth deſerve more than our deareſt Love, and our higheſt Praiſes. The day will come in which the Vail ſhall be taken off from the Face of Providence, and when we come to ſee things as indeed they are, we ſhall be perfectly reconciled to them, finding them to have been at Peace with us; and what we are now too apt to quarrel, we ſhall then admire. But I paſs on to the

Second Exhortation, *And I deſire you to account it your Duty not only to be ſatisfied about God's dealings with you, that all his Judgments are right, and that there is his Truth and Faithfulneſs in thoſe Afflictions with which he exerciſeth you, but alſo to ſee carefully to it, that your Spirits and Carriages, your Hearts and Affections be right too:* That was a ſevere Rebuke which God gave to *Eliphaz*, and ſpake his juſt reſentment and high diſpleaſure,

*Job*

*Job* 42. 7. *The Lord ſaid to* Eliphaz *the* Temanite, *my Wrath is kindled againſt thee and thy two Friends, for ye have not ſpoken of me the thing that is right, as my ſervant* Job *hath.* Know and Conſider this, it will be to you when under dark Diſpenſations, both an Honour and Comfort, that your Thoughts of God are right, the Frame and Temper of your Hearts right, and your Deportment and Behaviour right. When all is as it ſhould be, abating for Humane Infirmities, which you cannot avoid, and which God will graciouſly bear with, remembring your Frame, and conſidering you are but Duſt: To this Purpoſe I ſhall give you the following Counſels, deſiring you to put them in Practice.

Firſt, *Be ſenſible of that which God hath done to you:* He loves to be taken Notice of, and would not have his People careleſs or ſtupid, but *hear the Rod, and who hath appointed it:* And his Anger comes up into his Face, when *Men do not Obſerve his Works, nor regard the Operation of his Hands.* Withall it is a ſad *Omen*, and certain Preſage of ſome impending and approaching Judgment, when Godly Miniſters and Chriſtians are taken away, but there is a ſenſeleſneſs upon the Spirits of thoſe which are left behind, *Iſaiah* 57. 1. *The righteous periſheth, and no man layeth it to heart, and merciful Men are taken away, none conſidering that the righteous is taken away from the evil to come:* They neither mind who is gone, nor what is to come. Here is an excellent Perſon gone, a Man *of whom the World was not worthy*, and there are doubtleſs many to be found among us that do not lay ſuch a Providence to Heart. *He is dead; but what of that; no body ſhall live always: He is gone; e'en farewell He, we could ſpare more of them.* They did never Value the Life and Labours of ſuch a Man, nor are they Concerned at his Death. But I do adviſe every one of you, and others alſo, to beware of ſuch a Spirit as this. We find in the Scriptures that ordinarily when the Saints dyed, there was great Lamentation becauſe thereof. When good old *Jacob* dyed, the very *Egyptians* mourned for him threeſcore and ten dayes, *Gen.* 50. 3. When *Moſes* dyed, the Children of *Iſrael* wept for him in the Plains of *Moab* thirty dayes, *Deut.* 34. 8. When *Stephen* had been Stoned to Death, *Devout Men carried him to his Burial, and made great Lamentation*, Acts 8. 2. But though *Joſhua* had been an excellent Man, true to his truſt, and reſolved for God, and his Service and Honour, though he had gone before them as their Prince and Leader, and given them the Poſſeſſion of the Land of *Canaan*, yet when he dyed, we do not read of one Tear that was ſhed over him, nor of one Groan nor Sigh that was poured out upon him: And if you do but Conſult the Hiſtory, you will ſee that not long after the Wrath of God brake in upon that People.

We are not Ignorant that there are thoſe among us, that are glad at Heart when ſuch Men as He are taken away. He was a *Diſſenter*, ſay

ſay they, and a Schiſmatick, (which is more than they can prove) and ſuch as he they look upon as *the troublers of Iſrael*, and diſturbers of the Peace, the Burdens and Peſts of the places in which they live. Theſe are the Men that ſtand in their light, and would ſtop them in their full career of Profaneneſs, and they hate them becauſe they cannot away with that Reformation which theſe men preach up, and would fain promote and perfect; and upon this account theſe wretches, when ſuch men dye, will ring a Peal inſtead of a Knell, and when they are buried, could find in their Hearts to leap and dance upon their Graves. Well, ſince it is ſo, God will take theſe men away, and give unto thoſe Enemies their deſire; they ſhall be troubled with them no longer: He knows of another place, and better, where theſe his Servants will be welcome: There are myriads of Angels and Saints in Heaven that will rejoyce in their Company; but what will follow hereupon? Theſe mens departure from hence is no other than a making of way for ſome tremendous Judgment to come in their room. The Inhabitants of *Sodom* were as much vexed with Righteous *Lot* for his preciſeneſs, as he was with them for their profaneneſs and deteſtable abominations, and they had a great mind to be rid of him. Well, ſaith God, you ſhall ſee two *Angels* come from *Heaven* to ſend him out of *Sodom*. He linger'd a while, but at length he goes, and now they hoped a good Wind would blow after him, and they ſhould have fair Weather too, and they had it, but it did not laſt long; the Sun roſe glorioully upon them, but it ſoon ſate in a dark Cloud, in a Bed of Sorrow, *Gen.* 19. 24, 25. *When Lot entred into Zoar, the Lord rained upon Sodom and Gomorrah brimſtone and fire from the Lord out of Heaven: And he overthrew thoſe Cities, and all the plain, and all the Inhabitants of thoſe Cities, and that which grew upon the ground.* I will add but one Inſtance more, which ſingle and alone will be ſufficient evidence: Our *Lord and Saviour came to his own, but his own received him not, ſeeing in him no form nor comelineſs for which he ſhould be deſired.* They looked on him as the only Perſon that ſtood between them and their proſperity, and would, if tolerated, bring a ſtorm upon them, if they ſhould ſuffer him to live and go on, *the Romans would come and deſtroy their City*, whereupon they would have *Barabbas* a Thief releaſed, and *Jeſus* crucified; well, what followed, their fear did not indeed enter at that door, but it came in at another, when the *Meſſiah* was cut off, the *Romans* came, their Temple was burnt, their City turned into a ruinous heap, and the Inhabitants were deſtroyed with a moſt dreadful deſtruction.

Know, my Friends, the Saints and Servants of God are the *Pillars* of the Earth, the *Bail* to the World, that ſhall continue no longer than till God hath finiſhed his Number, called his Elect, and prepared his called Ones for Glory. The World is no more than a *Stage* upon which he acts his great and gracious deſign concerning thoſe whom he hath cho-

choſen from among the reſt of Mankind, and ſet apart for himſelf, and when that is throughly accompliſhed, the ſtage ſhall be taken down. A Criminal Woman for ſome Villany committed by her is condemned to dye, but being found with Child, ſhe is reprieved till ſhe hath brought forth, and then ſent to the Gallows, and Executed. So this World which lies in Wickedneſs is condemned to the Fire, once it was drown'd by a Deluge, but not waſhed from its filth; therefore its end is to be burned, only it is continued till all the Children of God be brought forth: Hereupon my Counſel is, that all who have a Kindneſs for *England*, or a love for themſelves, would take notice of ſuch diſpenſations, and lay them to their Hearts.

And in particular, as to this Providence which hath been ordered out to you who are the Members of this Congregation, I do heartily commend to you a ſerious reflection upon it, together with a deep and afflicting ſenſe of the hand of God therein. God hath been pleaſed to take away from you your *Excellent Paſtor*, that Good Shepherd who led you into green Paſtures, and by the Waters of ſtillneſs, and who (as it is ſaid of *David* in the 78 *Pſalm* 72.) *fed you according to the integrity of his heart, and guided you by the skilfulneſs of his hands.* I need not perfume his Name, which is a precious Oyntment, nor ſpend any of the little time (which is left) in commending to you him who was ſo well known, and ſo exceeding dear, therefore I will only ſay this in ſhort: He was a very gracious and holy Man, I doubt not to ſay, *an Iſraelite indeed*, greatly ſet for the Intereſt and Honour of God, and much in Communion with him. He had received a plentiful Unction from the Holy One, and was rich in Spirituals; and indeed in all my Converſes with him, I found him to be of a ſweet, affable and loving Temper, by means whereof his Grace was the more taking, being *like a Diamond ſet in Gold.* He had good Natural parts, which were cultivated and improved by acquired Learning. *He had found mercy to be faithful*, having been ſo all along to his *great Lord* and *Maſter*, his Cauſe and Intereſt, ſtanding his ground like a Rock unſhaken in the days of ſoareſt and moſt violent Temptation; nor would he touch (tho he ſaw others ſwallow down) thoſe things which his Conſcience told him would prove defiling to himſelf, or ſnares and ſtumbling-blocks unto others; yet was he a Man of peace, he would ſtudy it, adviſe it, and pray for it, and *follow it with all men*, ſo far as ever he could go without forſaking of Truth and Holineſs, that he was bound to be dear over; while he was true to his Principles, and held on his way, he was no *Incendiary*. He was a very modeſt Perſon, cloathed with Humility, as his upper Garment in which he walked up and down, I never ſaw him without it. You know full well, and are ready to teſtifie, that he was an induſtrious painful Labourerer in God's Vineyard; and as he laboured, ſo he longed for the Life, Salvation and Spiritual Progreſs of his Hearers, *traveling in birth to*

*see Christ formed in them.* He was a Workman that needed not to be ashamed, his Pulpit was a witness to his pains with you, and his Chamber to his Prayers for you, in the former he wrestled with you, and in the latter with God on your behalf: And as he preach'd so he walk'd, commending his Doctrine by his practice; was he an *Angel* to and in the Church? he was a *Saint* in the street, being in his Conversation a singular *Ornament* to the Gospel, and an Excellent Pattern to them that knew him: But he is gone, here you shall see his Face no more, and hear his Voice no more. Having finished that Work which his great Lord and Master had given him to do, he was by that *grim Messenger Death* sent for, and carried to his last and everlasting Home, the Presence-chamber of God, the habitation of his Holiness and Glory, where he hath received that Crown of Righteousness which was laid up for him. It is well with him, very well, Eternally well, so well that he would not have it better, for *he hath fulness of Joy, and Pleasures for evermore at the right hand of God*; he is at rest in the Bosom of his Lord, being satisfied with his likeness, and taking his fill of Love: Only his Body lies sleeping in its Bed of dust, but rests in hope of a comfortable *awaking*, and blessed Resurrection, when it shall stand up from the dead, shake off its dust, arise and shine, being made like unto Christs most glorious Body, no longer a clog and impediment to the Soul, but an *Help-meet*, fit to accompany it in all its great and blessed Employments and Operations. The loss is yours, and indeed it is a great one, it becomes you to be intimately sensible of it, and to bewail it. *Weep not for him, but for your selves, and for your Children*

Secondly, *Learn from hence one singular piece of Wisdom and good Husbandry, in Improving your faithful Ministers, and others, the precious Saints of God, while you have them among you.* Blessed be God, tho many are called up to a better State, yet there are many left behind, but they are only *sojourners* here for a short season, the time will come when they must be gone too, *the Number of their dayes is with God, who hath appointed and fixed those bounds which they cannot pass.* As for the Fathers where are they, and do the Prophets live for ever? No, no, Experience tells you that *they do not*; and they themselves are ready to tell you *that they would not*: And indeed it is a thousand pities *that they should*, as matters do now stand. It is pity they should alwayes carry about them *a Body of death*, which is worse than Death it self, that they should be alwayes groaning under Corruptions, and conflicting with Temptations. What! alwayes upon hot and hard service, and never have the *Victory and Triumph?* It is pity they should alwayes live in a dirty stinking World, in an ungrateful and malicious World. It shall not be, no, it shall not be; God hath graciously provided a better Place for them, and better Company, and incomparably better Things than ever they could have met with here. Well, do you think of this seriously, frequently, and manage your selves accordingly. Your late Pastor was snatched away

from you on a ſudden, as if Heaven had been longing for him, and in a kind of Haſte to have him there; and it may be quickly ſo with reference to others as well as to him, *none hath a Leaſe of his Life.*

And be not offended, if I propound one Queſtion to you, which is this: *Doth it not this day wound ſome of your ſpirits to think, your Miniſter is gone, and you have not Improved him as you might and ought to have done?* If a Friend lend you an excellent Book for a Week or Month, will you let it lye by on a Shelf, or throw it into a Corner, and not read it. God lends you Faithful Miniſters, gracious Friends and Relations, that you may get good by them, and be the better for them; if you will not make uſe of them, their very remembrance will be a terrible ſting in your Conſciences. Let me commend to you the Wiſdom and Practice of *Eliſha*, he had an inkling of his Maſters leaving him, and that more than once, 2 *Kings* 2. The Sons of the Prophets that were at *Bethel* ſaid unto him, *Knoweſt thou that the Lord will take away thy Maſter from thy head to day?* And ſo again ſaid the Sons of the Prophets that were at *Jericho*. Well, his Maſter carried as if he had a Mind to ſhake him off; three times he would have had him ſtaid behind, *Tarry here, I pray thee, for the Lord hath ſent me to Bethel*, v. 2. and ſo again *v.* 4. and yet again *v.* 6. but all would not prevail, ſtill *Eliſha* anſwered, *As the Lord liveth, and as thy Soul liveth, I will not leave thee:* But he kept with him, and his Eye fixed upon him, and by that means obtained *a double portion of his Spirit.* We need not a Spirit of Prophecy to let us underſtand that we ſhall be taken from one another. The Scripture aſſures us, that it is appointed for all Men once to to dye, and there is never a pore in our Body but what may ſerve as a door, little indeed, but wide enough to let Life out, and Death in; therefore while you have thoſe with you by whom you may get good for your Souls, make all the advantage of them that you can. *Do thus with your Fellow-Chriſtians,* your Godly Neighbours and Acquaintance, thoſe with whom you walk *in an holy Communion, and in breaking of Bread, and in Prayers.* You are all of a *Calling*, dealing with and for Heaven, now when Tradeſmen meet together, what do they diſcourſe of but their Calling, Merchants of their Ships, Shop-keepers of the price of their Commodities? Oh that you would do the ſame as to your excellent and holy Calling! Oh that Diſcourſes that tend to edification may be more frequent and familiar at your Tables and all your meetings! this would not hinder and obſtruct your worldly Affairs, but ſanctifie and ſweeten them: Our great and gracious Lord hath ſet us a Pattern. After his Reſurrection he continued with his Apoſtles forty days, of which he ſpent none in idleneſs and froth, but all *in ſpeaking of the things pertaining to the Kingdom of God*, Acts 1. 3. and ſo likewiſe do the ſame with your faithful Miniſters, attend their Miniſtry, hearken to their Doctrine, follow their holy Counſels, walk in

their light, and do not grieve their Hearts by your ſlights, neglects and diviſions, but obey them that have the Rule over you, knowing they watch for your Souls, and ſhew your Reſpect and Kindneſs to them *now* if *ever* you would do it, yet a little while and you ſhall not have the *Priviledge* of doing it. In Heaven they will not need your Countenance and your Prayers, and they will be above your Purſes. Do what you can now, knowing it is the beſt and moſt fruitful Soil you can find to ſow upon. *Paul* turned over to God that debt which he owed to *Oneſiphorus*, 2 Tim. 1. 16. *The Lord give mercy unto the houſe of Oneſiphorus, for he oft refreſhed me, and was not aſhamed of my Chain:* And *Ver.* 18. *The Lord grant unto him that he may find mercy of the Lord in that day:* And without peradventure God did moſt readily accept the Bill, and will be ſure to pay it with a very great increaſe.

Thirdly, *Inſtead of murmuring that God hath taken him from you, be you thankful, and with your Hearts bleſs his Name that ever he brought him to you:* For certain God had ſome Work for him to do in the City, and therefore he fetched him hither: 'Till then he liv'd at a diſtance, and this place was quite out of his *Road:* And Oh! what a ſingular Mercy was it, that God ſhould raiſe a Storm in the Countrey, and thereby drive him to this place, that ſo he might find thee out, and deliver a Meſſage from the great God to thee, and from the Prince and Fountain of Life ſpeak a Word of Life to thy Soul, who to that very day waſt a poor, ignorant, loſt, filthy, vile Creature, altogether dead in treſpaſſes and ſins! Prithee, go thy way admiring rich and free Grace, and ſhew the tender Bowels of a Chriſtian in pittying and bewailing thoſe poor Creatures, thy ignorant and graceleſs Neighbours, who came to the ſame Congregation with thee, ſate in the ſame ſeat with thee, and had the ſame Means with thee, but got no good at all, remaining in the ſame Condition in which they were before, Vaſſals of Sin and Satan, *in the gall of bitterneſs and bond of iniquity:* Thou haſt been ſavingly enlightned, when others are ſtill unacquainted with God and the things of God; thou haſt turned thy back upon thy wicked Aſſociates and Courſes of Debauchery, but others are the Companions of Fools ſtill, and march on to Hell as if they were in Poſt-haſte, Swearing and Curſing, being Drunk and Unclean ſtill. Do thou, I ſay, Bleſs God for it, and be exceeding thankful, that his Servant liv'd 'till he had wrought ſavingly upon thy Soul, and muſt not himſelf go to Heaven before he had brought thee to God.

Fourthly, *Remember the precious Truths which he Preached to you, and often call to mind thoſe holy Counſels that He gave you:* This is a great Duty bound upon you by Scripture-precept, *Heb.* 13. 7. *Remember them which have the Rule over you, who have Preached to you the word of God, whoſe Faith follow, conſidering the end of their Converſation:* Where the Apoſtle did not ſpeak only of thoſe that were preſent, but alſo of them that were gone. Now, pray, do ſo; Remember him, and the gracious Speeches you have heard from him, and the wholſom Advice you have received from him, and the bleſſed Truths that have been deliver'd by him, and hold them faſt; and if any ſhall now come, and bring with him another Goſpel than that ye have received, entertain him not, liſten not to him, *let him be accurſed*, Galat. 1. There are many falſe Prophets gone forth into the World, and into this Nation and City, yea, *there are many Antichriſts, whereby we know this is the laſt time*, and it is like there will be ſome plucking and tugging at your Faith. When an Orthodox, Gracious and Peaceable Miniſter is dead, then is the Devil buſie, thinking it a fit Opportunity for him and his Servants to ſow his Seed and put off his Wares.

Wares; that is a time for Men of dividing Principles to infuſe and ſpread their wretched Notions, and diſturb the Peace of Churches. If you love your ſelves, and as you will Anſwer it another day, do you avoid them, and take heed you do not drink in any unſound Opinions, any rotten and exploded Errors, an Old Falſhood under the Notion of a New Light, and to this end bear upon your thoughts the Text laſt mention'd, which in my Judgment furniſheth us with a Reaſon why ſo many are Fly-blown in their Heads, and led into Error in theſe ſeducing times, *viz.* They do not remember them that have the Rule over them, they do not Obſerve their Faith, nor the End of their Converſation: For many tho' Convinc'd of the Truth of thoſe Doctrines which they Preached, and Eye-witneſſes of their Converſations, that they were Holy, Exemplary, and according to the Rule of the Goſpel, yet they [illegible] moſt abſurdly queſtion what ſuch Paſtors did deliver, and believe a Stranger and follow him: Whereas, whom ſhould you Credit? whom have you Reaſon and Encouragement to follow but him who made it his Buſineſs to get to Heaven himſelf, and to ſhew you the right way, that He might meet you there, and have you for his Crown and Joy? You have found him faithful to God and to You, why then ſhould you not continue ſtedfaſt in, and immovable from thoſe holy Truths which he hath deliver'd to you, rather than give an Ear to them whom you know not from whence they came, nor what Spirit they are of?

Fifthly, *Stand in the gap, doing what in you lies that this Breach, this great Breach which hath been made upon you, may be made up again, and that with all convenient ſpeed:* You that have a ſincere Love to the Intereſt of Chriſt and the Everlaſting Goſpel, and a real Kindneſs to the Church of which you are Members, lay out your ſelves to ſuch a purpoſe, and that to the utmoſt. You that have the Spirit of Grace and Supplication poured out upon you, and dwelling in you, that have Acquaintance with God, and an Intereſt at the Throne of Grace, now do you improve that Intereſt, try what you can do, and beg of God, beg earneſtly that he would be graciouſly pleaſed to ſet up a burning and ſhineing Light in this Candleſtick, and to provide for you ſuch a Workman as is both skilfull and faithfull, that needeth not to be aſhamed, and that will build proper Materials, *not Wood, and Hay, and Stubble, but Gold and Silver, and precious Stones, upon that good Foundation*, which this holy Man of God, now with God, hath laid among you.

And let ſpecial Care be taken that there be no unbrotherly and unbecoming Diviſions among you, but avoid them, delight not in Breaches, leſt the Devil enter in by them, but *keep the Unity of the Spirit in the bond of Peace*, and be of one mind, of one accord, that ſo the precious Goſpel may not ſuffer by your means, for if it doth, verily you ſhall pay for it. Adviſe together, and manage all your Meetings and Conſultations calmly, with Wiſdom and Meekneſs, and Brotherly Love: And if you ſhall ſee Occaſion of doing ſo, Adviſe alſo with others, who will be cheerfully willing to afford you all the Aſſiſtance that they can. But above all, be ſure to Adviſe with God, and Wreſtle mightily with him, who is the beſt Counſellor, and holds all the Stars in his right hand. Go, go to Heaven for a Paſtor, and beg of the Lord who knoweth the Abilities and the Hearts of all Men, that He would Chooſe for you, and ſend One that will be indeed a Bleſſing. Let me tell you this, when a godly able Miniſter dyeth, the People who have loſt him, have very little Reaſon to expect that God will ſend them another, 'till they have been earneſt and importunate in ſeeking One, that is, 'till they have Prayed him in, and Sighed him in, and Wept him in. And I beſeech you, look to it that you be not miſguided by any bad Counſellor, and that no ſordid miniſter Dyeth, no petty private particular Intereſt do betray you into the Hands of an unfit Perſon, one that is Corrupt in Judgment, tainted with Erroneous Principles, who will endeavour to Poiſon you; or one that is of a Factious Spirit, who will foment and keep up, and help to increaſe thoſe differences, the laying and compoſing of which doth deſerve and call for the utmoſt Endeavours of thoſe that fear *God* and bear good Will to *Sion*. That which was the Prayer of *Moſes* for *Iſrael*, is and ſhall be mine for you, *Numbers* 22. 16, 17. *Let the Lord, the God of the Spirits*

*Spirits of all Fleſh, ſet a Man over this Congregation, that may go out before you, and that may go in before you, that may lead you out, and that may bring you in, that this Congregation of the Lord may not be as Sheep without a Shepherd.* The good Lord give you a Man after his own Heart!

You will think it now high time for me to ſhut up this Diſcourſe. and I think ſo too. You, I ſuppoſe, will not; ſure I am, you have no reaſon to judge me uncharitable, if I look upon this Congregation as being no better than mine own and others. Surely there are ſome here, in whom to this day *Satan* hath his Seat, while in others of you *Chriſt* hath Erected his Throne. Surely this is not a Floor in which there is nothing but Wheat. For mine own part, I do deſire to be a *Paſtor to ſuch a Church*, as all the Members of it are *Saints*; for as I greatly love *pure Ordinances*, ſo an *Holy Communion*, but I would not deſire to be a Preacher to ſuch a *Congregation* in which there are *none but Saints*, becauſe, though *Edifying Work* be very good, and great, and excellent, and accordingly to be attended to, yet *Converting Work* is the main and principal Work of the Goſpel Miniſtry: Thus our *Lord Jeſus* ſpake to *Paul*, Acts 26. 17, 18. *I ſend thee to the Gentiles, to open their eyes, and to turn them from darkneſs to light, and from the power of Satan to God:* Therefore, before we part, I would leave ſomething among you, and with thoſe of you who are as yet in an unregenerate ſtate, that through the Bleſſing of God accompanying it, it may do them good.

You that have ſate under the Miniſtry of this Holy Man, and have not had your Hearts pierced with it, nor your Conſciences awakened, but have all this while been in a profound, yea dead Sleep: Or, it may be, you have been awakened, and ſometimes ſcar'd and frighted, (as I doubt not but you will own him to have been a ſpiritual and lively Preacher) and for a while you have been greatly concerned, and ſtarted up, but the Pang went over, and you e'en laid your Head down again upon the Pillow of Carnal Security, and at this day are as faſt aſleep in your Sins as He is in his Grave. I know you not, but if you know your ſelves I will ſay this to you; Fall down upon your Knees, and humble your ſelves greatly before God, and admire his Patience and Goodneſs, giving to him the Glory of it. O what a Mercy is it, that your Miniſter is gone, who was fit for Heaven, and that you are yet here who have been all your dayes induſtriouſly fitting your ſelves for Hell! Do you Bleſs God with your Souls, and all that is within you, that you are yet alive in that very place where you have ſquandred away ſo many precious Seaſons, golden Opportunities, withſtood ſo many loud and earneſt Calls, where you have deſpiſed and ſlighted ſo many free Offers of Grace, and been altogether barren and unfruitful under ſuch Beams of Goſpel-light, and Dews of Heavenly Doctrine. And when you are at home, retire into your Chamber or ſome private place, and beg of God, yea moſt heartily beg, that *the Death of this holy Man may go near to you*, and that it may make that deep impreſſion upon you, and proſper to the doing of that good Work in your Souls which was not done by all the Sermons which you heard from him. Oh that he might prove another *Samſon*, triumphing over the Enemies of God and Souls, killing more Sins among you and in you by his Death, than he did by his Preaching all his Life.

Know it will be a moſt bleſſed Day, I mean the laſt and great Day, that of the Reſurrection, and it will be at that Day a moſt Comfortable Meeting that He and you will have, if then he ſhall find thoſe Gracious whom he left Wicked and Profane; if he ſhall find them in Chriſt, and alive unto God, whom he left dead in Treſpaſſes and Sins; if at the Reſurrection He ſhall find them to have been *renewed in the ſpirits of their minds*, whom, when he went out of the World, he left *Carnal, and ſold under ſin.*

But if at that Day he ſhall find you the very ſame that at his Death he left you, in a Chriſtleſs and Graceleſs State, know and tremble at the Thoughts of it, that Prophet, that Man of God will ſtand forth as a Witneſs againſt you. Truly, it would prove ſome piece of Happineſs to loſt and ruined Sinners in Hell, ſome alleviation of their Sorrow, and abatement of their Torment there, if they could but quite forget *there had ever been a Prophet among them*, upon that account they wou'd lye at more eaſe than they are like

now

now to do: Every reflection you make, every time that you shall think what a Minister you had, what Preaching you sate under, what Means you enjoy'd, it will be as a Sword in your Bones, and as Oyl to your Flames.

Let me but add this one thing more, and with that I will put a Period to this Discourse. If you will not be reclaimed and reformed, but go on in the frowardness of your Hearts, and in crooked ways with the Workers of Iniquity, He that Prayed for your Conversion and Salvation, and Preached to you the great things of the Law, and the precious things of the Gospel; in a word, He that Mourned for you, and Wept over you, because you had sinned and had not repented, must at the last day, and will look cheerfully, and be perfectly pleased when he shall with Christ the Judge Vote your Damnation. Be perswaded to read over, and seriously think upon that place, 2 *Corinth.* 2. 14, &c. *Now thanks be unto God, which always causeth us to triumph in Christ; for we are unto God a sweet savour of Christ in them that are saved, and in them that perish; to the one we are the savour of death unto death, to the other the savour of life unto life:* For Ministers to be unto their Hearers the savour of Life unto Life, is very sweet, and highly desirable, but it is exceeding dreadful for them to be unto any of them the savour of Death unto Death, however they must be both; and the Apostle saith, *in this we triumph:* But how, *O holy Paul*, canst thou find in thy Heart to do this? Where are the Soundings of thy Bowels? What! triumph at the sight of poor Creatures going down to Hell! Any one will conclude that Parent hath no Natural Affection, doth not love his Child, who goeth leaping and dancing while he follows it to the Grave or to the Gallows: But if you do observe that which followeth in the 17*th.* Verse, you will be easily reconciled to the Apostle; *For we are not as many, which corrupt or deal deceitfully with the Word of God, but as of sincerity, but as of God, in the sight of God speak we in Christ.* When *Paul* and other godly Ministers triumph over their lost and damned Hearers, they do it not so much because they see them miserable, as because they have the Testimony of their own Consciences; these poor Creatures are lost, but not through any Fault of mine, they go to Hell, but God knoweth I did not send them thither; I Preached to them, and, God is my Witness, I did it in Sincerity.

*FINIS.*